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SUBJECT: WHITE PAPER ON LIBYAN SUPPORT FOR TERRORISM

1. THE DEPARTMENT WILL RELEASE A WHITE PAPER TITLED "LIBYAN SUPPORT FOR TERRORISM THREATENS THE MIDDLE EAST" ON MONDAY, AUGUST 27. THE TEXT OF THE WHITE PAPER, AND GUIDANCE FOR ANSWERING PRESS/HOST GOVERNMENT INQUIRIES, FOLLOWS. A HARD COPY OF THE REPORT WILL BE POUCHED TO POSTS.

2.BEGIN TEXT.

LIBYAN SUPPORT FOR TERRORISM THREATENS THE MIDDLE EAST

ON MAY 30 1990, TERRORISTS FROM THE PALESTINE LIBERATION FRONT (PLF), A GROUP LED BY ABU ABBAS AND SUPPORTED BY LIBYA, UNDERTOOK A TERRORIST OPERATION IN ISRAEL. THE ATTACK, HAD IT SUCCEEDED, WOULD HAVE KILLED CIVILIANS--PERHAPS INCLUDING AMERICANS--ON TEL AVIV'S PUBLIC BEACHES. THE CAPTURED TERRORISTS HAVE STATED PUBLICLY THAT CIVILIAN CASUALTIES WERE AMONG THEIR OBJECTIVES. THE PLF CLAIMED RESPONSIBILITY SHORTLY AFTER THE ATTACK IN A STATEMENT TO THE PRESS IN BAGHDAD. LIBYA WORKED WITH PLF LEADER ABU ABBAS--THE SELF PROCLAIMED "MASTERMIND" OF THE 1985 HIJACKING OF THE CRUISE SHIP ACHILLE LAURO IN WHICH AN AMERICAN WAS BRUTALLY KILLED--AND PROVIDED EXTENSIVE SUPPORT ESSENTIAL TO THE PLF OPERATION.

LIBYA'S SUPPORT CRUCIAL TO THE PLF OPERATION

LIBYA PROVIDED DIRECT SUPPORT IN ALL PHASES OF PREPARATION FOR THE PLF ATTACK AGAINST ISRAEL FROM PLANNING THE ATTACK TO ACCOMPANYING THE SHIP FROM WHICH IT WAS LAUNCHED. THE FULL EXTENT OF LIBYAN COMPLICITY BECAME CLEAR AS INFORMATION GATHERED BOTH BEFORE AND AFTER THE ATTACK FROM A VARIETY OF SOURCES WAS PIECED TOGETHER. PLF MEMBERS BEGAN PREPARING FOR A SEABORNE OPERATION AT LEAST AS EARLY AS OCTOBER 1988. FROM LATE 1988 UNTIL THE OPERATION WAS LAUNCHED TRAINING AND PREPARATIONS TOOK PLACE IN LIBYA AT SEVERAL LOCATIONS--INCLUDING A LIBYAN NAVAL BASE. LIBYAN NAVAL PERSONNEL WERE DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN THE TRAINING AND OVERALL SUPERVISION FOR THE OPERATION.

ASSAULT BOATS PURCHASED AND MODIFIED. LIBYA MANUFACTURES ASSAULT BOATS OF THE TYPE USED IN THE PLF ATTACK AT ITS BENGHAZI SHIPYARD. SEVERAL OF THESE BOATS WHICH ARE ABOUT 27 FEET LONG AND HAVE A TOP SPEED OF 35 KNOTS, WERE MODIFIED IN LIBYA TO CARRY AND FIRE A HEAVY MACHINE GUN AND A MULTIPLE ROCKET LAUNCHER. THIS TYPE OF ASSAULT BOAT WAS AVAILABLE AT SEVERAL SITES USED BY THE PLF. TWO OF THESE BOATS WERE CAPTURED DURING THE PLF ATTACK.

TINY STAR ACQUIRED. STAR NAVIGATION COMPANY OF PIRAEUS, GREECE, PURCHASED A MERCHANT SHIP WHICH IT NAMED THE TINY STAR IN APRIL OF THIS YEAR. THE SHIP EARLIER CALLED THE INGER M, SAILED FROM CYPRUS ON APRIL 10 DECLARING ITS DESTINATION TO BE TRIFOLI, LIBYA. THE TINY STAR WAS THE MOTHERSHIP THAT CARRIED THE ASSAULT BOATS AND PLF TERRORISTS TO THE LAUNCH SITE.

RETRACING THE COURSE OF THE TINY STAR

TINY STAR'S UNUSUAL MOVEMENTS IN LIBYAN WATERS BETWEEN LATE APRIL AND MID-JUNE COINCIDED WITH ACTIVITIES OF THE PLF BOTH IN PREPARING FOR THE MAY 30 ATTACK AND IN DEMOBILIZING FOLLOWING THE FAILED OPERATION. TINY STAR WAS FIRST NOTED IN EARLY MAY IN TRIPOLI HARBOR. SHE NEXT MOVED TO A LIBYAN NAVAL BASE LOCATED EAST OF TRIPOLI WHERE, ON MAY 24, SHE ENGAGED IN CARGO OPERATIONS WHICH INCLUDED LOADING THE SIX ASSAULT BOATS USED IN THE RAID. THE SHIP SAILED FROM THE LIBYAN NAVAL BASE TO RAS EL-HILAL TO PICK UP THE PLF MEMBERS WHO WERE TO MAKE THE ATTACK. AT RAS EL-HILAL ON MAY 27, AT LEAST SIXTEEN TERRORISTS WERE LOADED ABOARD TINY STAR, WHICH THEN DEPARTED LIBYA FOR THE DROP-OFF POINT WEST OF ISRAEL.

AFTER LAUNCHING THE ASSAULT BOATS, THE TINY STAR PROBABLY TRAVELLED WEST-SOUTHWEST TO BLEND IN WITH THE HUNDREDS OF MERCHANT SHIPS ENROUTE TO AND FROM THE SUEZ CANAL. THE SHIP WAS DOCKED IN MID-JUNE AT THE LIBYAN PORT OF TOBRUK. TINY STAR RETURNED TO TRIPOLI HARBOR IN LATE JUNE. IN LATE JULY, THE SHIP SAILED FROM TRIPOLI TO PIRAEUS GREECE.

IMPACT ON THE PEACE PROCESS

THE ABORTIVE MAY 30 PLF ATTACK ON ISRAEL IS EXTREMELY DISTURBING:

-- IT LED TO THE SUSPENSION OF THE US-PLO DIALOGUE. ABU ABBAS, LEADER OF THE PLF, IS A MEMBER OF THE PLO EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE. PLO CHAIRMAN ARAFAT DID NOT CONDEMN THIS ACTION